

Massachusetts Ocean Management Task Force



Public Informational Meetings
December 2003

Overall Goals of the Massachusetts Ocean Management Task Force

- Define our guiding principles for the use of state waters and ocean resources
- Examine Massachusetts coastal policies and the adequacy of the current legal/regulatory framework
- Determine future information requirements for managing state waters
- Recommend framework and tools for governance and management of state waters to ensure that statewide interests are met



What the Task Force is NOT doing...

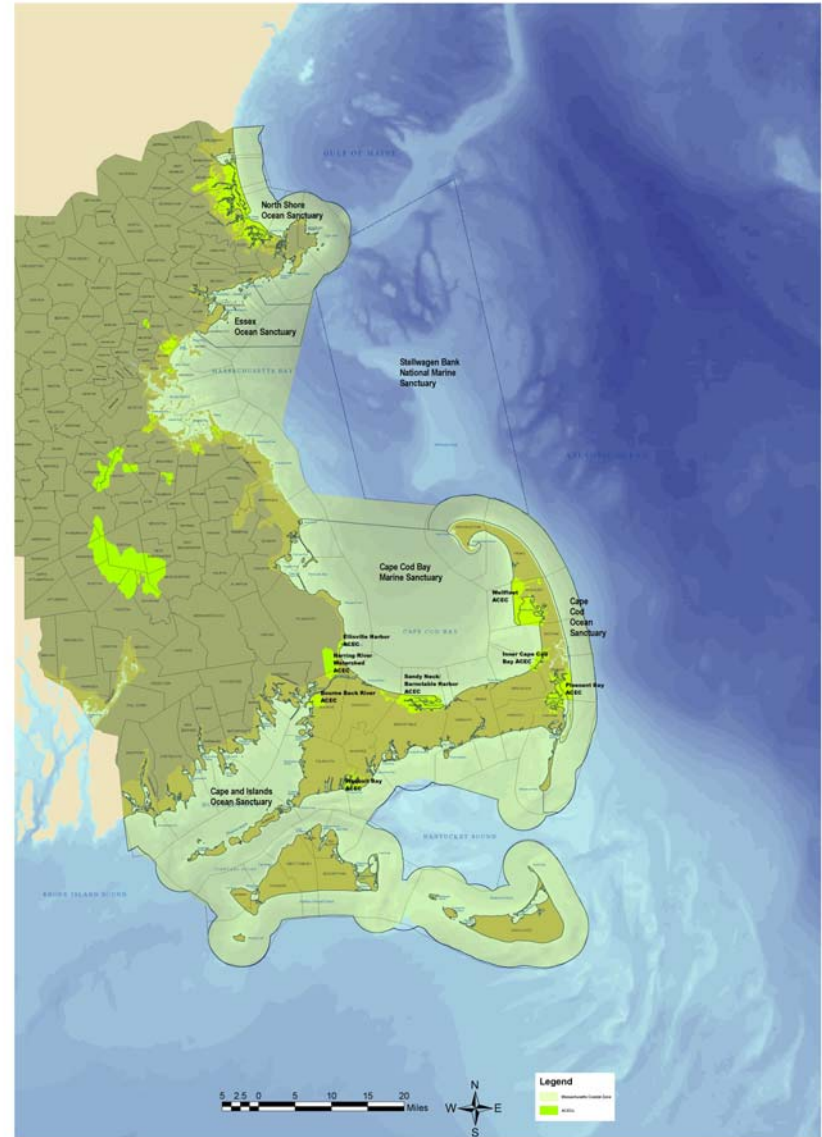
- Actually developing an Ocean Management Plan or Zoning Map for the Commonwealth or any part of it
- Reviewing, approving or denying individual projects or types of uses
- Superceding existing authorities (including fisheries management)
- Addressing issues outside of Massachusetts jurisdiction (ie. Federal Authority)

What the Task Force is doing...

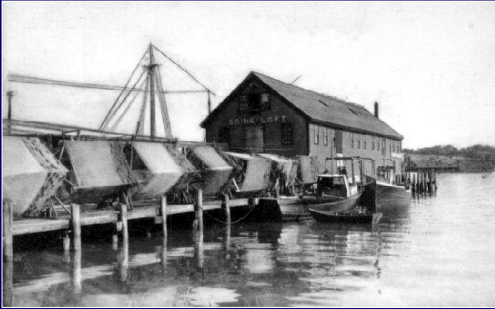
- Developing principles
- Making recommendations to the Secretary
- Providing a record for potential action by the Administration
- Providing a basis for further public comment and participation in the future

Massachusetts Coastal and Ocean Jurisdictions

- Generally, state waters extend 3 miles offshore, (except for Mass. Bay and Cape Cod Bay)
- Court ruling: the center of Nantucket Sound is federal waters
- “Home Rule” traditions give municipalities regulatory authority in town waters
- Stellwagen Bank NMS adjacent to state waters



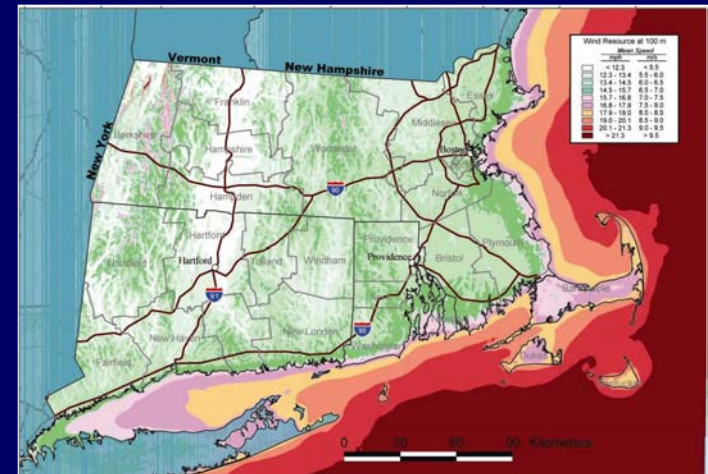
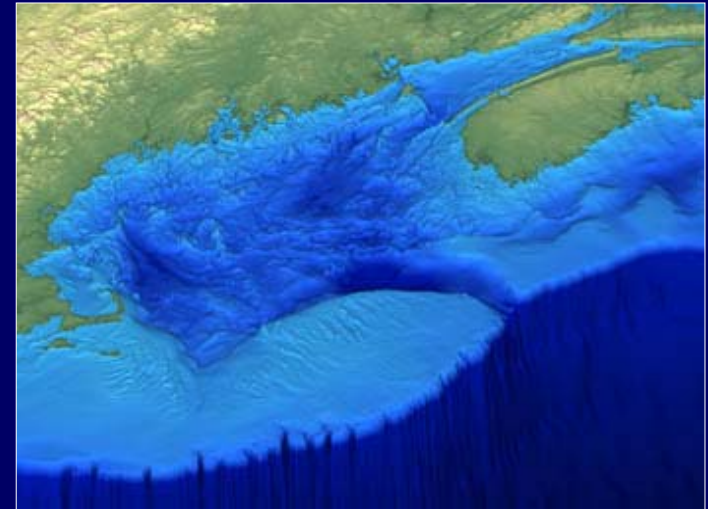
Ocean Management Background



- Ocean management historically focused on a single resource or activity (*e.g.*, fishing regulations or shipping lanes) rather than a comprehensive approach
- In Massachusetts, municipalities and state agencies regulate many near-shore uses (*e.g.*, mooring fields, Chapter 91 public trust licenses)
- No overarching planning or coordination of ocean uses/activities

Why so much attention on the Massachusetts Coast?

- Strong historical, cultural, economic ties to the ocean
- Relatively small, densely populated coastal state
- Shallow offshore waters
- Optimal offshore wind resource
- Heavy recreational use
- Strong tradition of environmental leadership
- An incubator for many new marine-related technologies
- Numerous research institutions
- Multiple and competing private uses of public resource



Ocean management is quickly becoming a hot public policy issue



Challenges of Increased Demand on Ocean Resources

- Absence of a comprehensive management approach
- A “first come, first served” reactive approach to use allocation
- Difficult to plan for or implement ecosystem management
- Outdated ocean governance structure
- No equivalent to on-shore zoning to manage access to and use of ocean resources
- Proliferation of exclusive and competing use projects
- No clear process for leasing offshore Commonwealth tidelands



Massachusetts Ocean Management Initiative: Task Force Recommendations as a building block to longer-term results

- Allow for uses compatible with economic and natural resource protection goals for public ocean resource
- Harmonize uses and protections at boundaries with other jurisdictions
- Buy-in from federal ocean managers to provide seamless management of adjacent federal waters
- Formalize management of coastal waters up to 200 miles offshore through a federal-state partnership



What the Task Force has accomplished already...

- Developed Draft or 'Working' Principles
- Working Groups
 - Data Trends and Needs
 - Use Characterization
 - Policy
 - Framework
- Preliminary Recommendations

Massachusetts Ocean Management Principles

- Preamble
- Protecting the public trust
- Valuing biodiversity
- Respecting the interdependence of ecosystems
- Fostering sustainable uses
- Using the best available information
- Encouraging public participation in decisions



Preliminary Recommendations

1. Comprehensive Ocean Resource Management Act (CORMA)

- Codify ocean management principles
- Articulate statewide interests
- Provide legal authority to develop ocean management plans, streamline governance of ocean resources, and establish an oceans coordinating council
- Establish standards for allowable use and impact control
- Dedicate license fees to support ocean management



Preliminary Recommendations (continued)

2. Streamline state planning and regulatory review processes; consider enhancing the role of the EOESEA Secretary in planning/policy for use of ocean waters and lands under the water
3. Joint Management of State and Federal Waters
4. Update regulations implementing the Ocean Sanctuaries Act or incorporate in CORMA
5. Revise fees charged by the Commonwealth under Chapter 91 authority and include the impact and/or the economic value of the regulated activity



Preliminary Recommendations (continued)

6. Develop and implement methodologies and standards for analysis and mitigation of visual, cultural, and aesthetic impacts of proposed projects
7. Continue to improve coordination with federal, regional, local, and state agencies
8. Review and modify as needed the public notification requirements associated with state permitting processes
9. Statutory authority to designate areas to protect important fisheries, marine biodiversity, and ecosystems

Preliminary Recommendations (continued)

10. A comprehensive ocean resources monitoring and research plan
11. Public dissemination of certain data collected on the Commonwealth's resources
12. Require environmental monitoring to aid managers in assessing impacts and gain understanding of the cumulative impact of multiple projects
13. Creation of a Marine Science Advisory Board
14. An inventory and links to all ocean resource and use data
15. Develop GIS-based use characterizations